

REMARKS

The present Amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed June 28, 2006.

Claims 1-26 are pending in the aforementioned application with claims 21-26 being newly presented.

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Twardowski et al. (5,569,182). It is respectfully submitted that the present invention embodied in claim 1 is patentably distinguishable from Twardowski '182. For example, Twardowski '182 fails to teach or suggest the recited "outwardly extending ridge dimensioned and positioned to engage interior wall portions of the blood vessel in supporting relation therewith to substantially minimize collapse of the vessel wall and occlusion of at least one lumen". Twardowski '182 is devoid of this feature and the structural capabilities thereto provided. Moreover, Twardowski '182 is directed to spacing the ends of a multiple lumen catheter to achieve less clot formation and to facilitate blood flow. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 13-17 and 19-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Mahurkar (5,221,256). It is respectfully submitted that the present invention embodied in independent claims 13 and 20 is patentably distinguishable from Mahurkar '256. For example, Mahurkar '256 fails to teach or suggest the recited "plurality of ridges" or "pair of ridges" which extend outwardly and are "dimensioned and positioned to engage interior wall portions of the blood vessel in supporting relation therewith to substantially minimize collapse of the vessel wall and substantially prevent occlusion . . ." as generally recited in claims 13 and 20.

Moreover, whereas Mahurkar '256 discloses a multiple-lumen catheter providing for "*internal* reinforcement to facilitate insertion of the catheter into a patient and to prevent collapse *of the lumens* [of the catheter] during hemodialysis" (col. 2, lines 58-63) (emphasis added), the present invention provides for reinforcement of the *blood vessel* into which the catheter is inserted. In addition, Mahurkar '256 fails to teach or suggest the recited "ridges" "that substantially extend" to the distal end of the body as required by each of independent claims 13 and 20. This feature provides support about the entire opening area to minimize the potential for collapse of the blood vessel adjacent the distal end of the catheter body. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 3-8 and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Twardowski '182 in view of Mahurkar '256. It is respectfully submitted that these claims are patentable for at the least the reasons independent claim 1 is patentable as discussed hereinabove. Accordingly, the withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 9 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Twardowski '182 in view of Mahurkar '256 in further view of Spehalski (6,099,513). Claim 9 is dependent upon claim 1, which, as indicated above, is believed to be allowable. Claim 18 is dependent on claim 13 which, as indicated above, is believed to be allowable. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

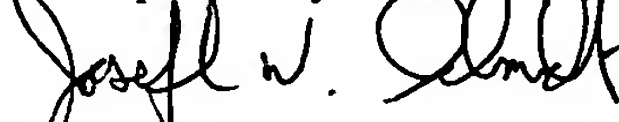
New independent claim 21 also recites features not taught or suggested by Twardowski '182, Mahurkar '256, or Spehalski '513. For example, none of the references either alone or in combination disclose the recited "ridges defining support

surfaces spaced from the septum and dimensioned to engage interior wall portions of the blood vessel in supporting relative therewith to substantially minimize collapse of the vessel wall and prevent occlusive of the blood vessel". Allowance of this claim and the claims depending therefrom is respectfully requested.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the references of record disclose or suggest the present invention as recited in the claims considered individually or in combination, considered in whole or in part. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and objections and allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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